

# Woman enjoys project

By Karen Krien

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Ever hear of "findagrave.com?" Marilyn Birkby of Denver, along with the help of her husband, Dale, know all about it.

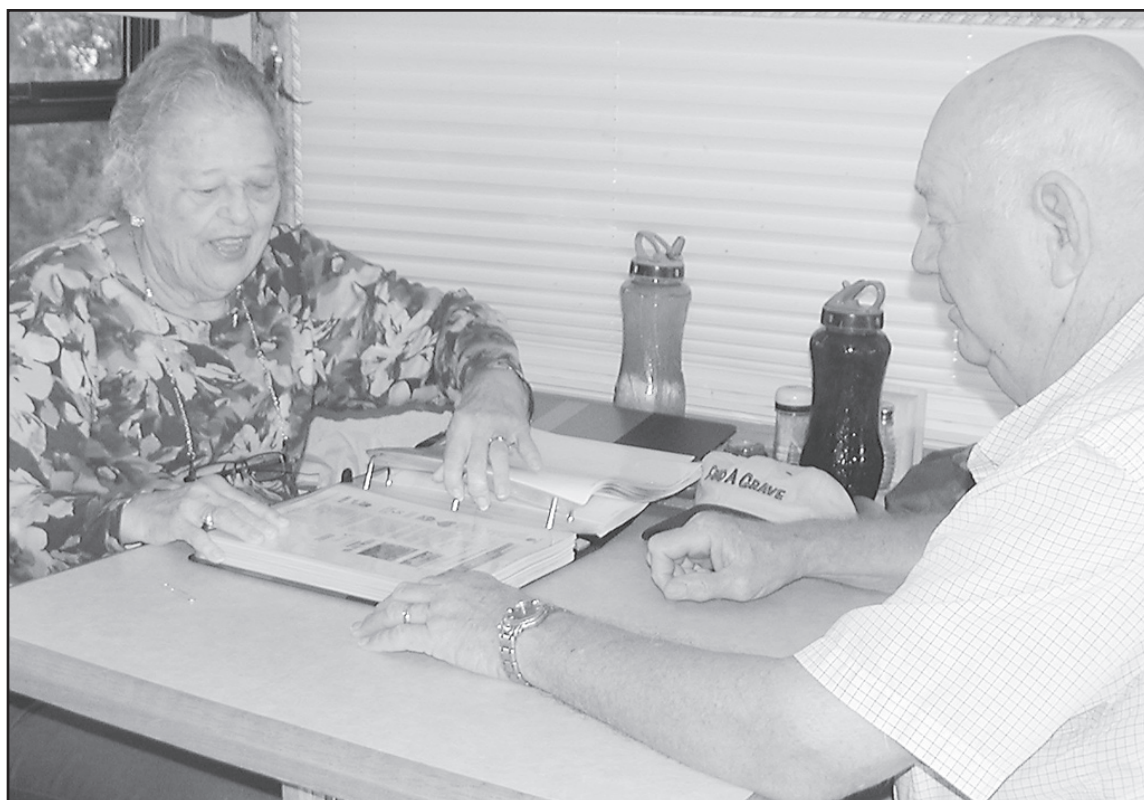
Mrs. Birkby, formerly of McDonald, has been a volunteer for Find A Grave since her brother, John Johnson died in early 2010 and is buried at Fort Logan National Cemetery, Denver. Each week, she and Dale go to that cemetery, not far from their home in Denver, where they find, identify and take a picture of 15 different gravestones of fallen or dead military men and women. There are over 100,000 graves in Fort Logan.

When my brother died, Mrs. Birkby said, I wanted to do something to honor him. She heard about Find a Grave and she felt this was just the thing. As a genealogy buff, this was another extension in a very different way.

As a volunteer, Mrs. Birkby receives a list of requests, sometimes four or five a day, which goes to all the volunteers. She tries to claim 12 to 15 names. By now, the Birkby's pretty much know the layout of the cemetery and their way around.

As they are looking and photographing, they wear Find A Grave hats and pins identifying themselves. There are several other volunteers at the cemetery because Find A Grave receives so many requests wanting photos and information about loved ones buried there. Fort Logan can have up to 24 funerals a day and there are many requests wanting photos and information about a loved one.

Each week, after their trek to the cemetery, she spends time transferring the information and putting it and the photo of the grave stone on the internet site. There are 95 million graves on the



MARILYN BIRKBY goes over some records with her husband Dale.

Herald staff photo by Karen Krien

site, she said.

People can go to findagrave.com and make a request. There is no charge.

Marilyn was born in 1941 to Lee and Fern Ruth (Headrick) Johnson in the St. Francis Hospital. She lived the next 10 years in McDonald. Mr. Johnson was a builder and, in 1951, there was no work so he moved his family to Denver where Marilyn finished her education. It was there that she met her future husband, Dale, through a mutual friend.

Mrs. Birkby was always interested in genealogy and had traced her's and her husband's family back as far as she can until she stumbles on some new information.

When she started working with Find A Grave, she found there could be another calling and that was to start back in the McDonald, Benkelman, Bird City and Haigler areas where she had other relatives. That calling was to take photos and information from every stone in Grace Cemetery in McDonald. There are 815 people buried in the cemetery, she said.

After they have the information off a grave stone, they go to the library in Atwood where the old

newspapers are on microfilm. We find an obituary for the person. But she tries to go even further, linking family members to those who have died and sometimes, this takes them to other area towns.

The McDonald 125th anniversary will be held in 2013. When that weekend rolls around, she will have at least four huge notebooks with the information for each person enclosed in a plastic sleeve. If she is unable to complete the job before the celebration, which is over Memorial Day, she will continue to work on it until it is done. The books a gift to the city of McDonald and will either be housed in the city hall offices or the McDonald Library.

Last week, the Birkby's were in Bird City staying at TNT's trailer park. They said the park was wonderful and they had stayed there several times as they were gathering information for Marilyn's notebooks.

Their second reason for being at

the trailer park was to attend the Headrick reunion held at the Bird City park on Sunday, Sept. 2.

We have a Headrick reunion on the Sunday of Labor Day weekend, she said. Her uncle, Keith Headrick of Goodland is the only living uncle. She has 19 living cousins and all but three were there to enjoy the picnic.

The Birkby plan to make several more trips to western Kansas before the weather gets too cold. That way, while Dale is watching sports on television, Marilyn will be happily typing up the information she has gathered.

## Famous Quote

• In philosophy, it is not the attainment of the goal that matters, it is the things that are met with by the way - Havelock Ellis

# Traveling singer visits in Bird City

Michael Gracy will bring "Country Church" to Immanuel United Methodist Church in Bird City this Sunday, Sept. 23, at 10:55 a.m.

Michael Gracy is a Nashville recording artist who was born in Oklahoma and raised on a farming and ranching operation in South Central Kansas. He had a love for music influenced by his grandpa and a neighbor down the road. At age 14, his father bought him a guitar and he played in bands in high school and college.

After getting married he hung up the guitar for 30 years. At age 51 he checked himself into Alcohol Rehab. Having a spiritual influence he started going to church where his pastor got him involved in the choir and playing specials almost every Sunday.

With encouragement Michael started writing songs. Feeling the calling he started lay speaking and got acquainted with several pastors and lay speakers. This started his music ministry!

A person with Nashville connections suggested Michael contact a person in Nashville. HMG in Nashville began promoting Michael, and he had four hit songs on the charts between 2004-2006. He signed with Tate Music Group, Mustang, Okla., and released his first album, "He Writes the Song" in 2011.

Gracy and his wife started Heart of Grace Ministries in 2000 and have traveled full time spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ, from Nashville to California and many points in between both North and South.

## McDonald News

By Sandy Binning

Last week Becky Antholz, and Hulda Dorsch attended the Denver Brass performance in St. Francis.

Kenneth and Phyllis Wilkinson attended Keenan Reeh's surprise birthday party Sunday evening.

Eleanor Swihart and Allison Swihart traveled to Florida Sept. 5. They attended the funeral of Eleanor's brother, Edgar Lieb. Eleanor and Allison returned Thursday, Sept. 13.

Phyllis Wingfield was the recipient of a "surprise" in her yard this weekend. She would like to thank whoever left the special lawn ornament.

Betty Lewis attended the Highway 36 garage sales in McDonald this weekend.

The Highway 36 Garage Sales were a success with food and fellowship enjoyed by many.



## Household Hazardous Waste Roundup!

Do You Have Any Unwanted Products Stored at Home!

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

Cheyenne County will hold a Household Hazardous Waste Collection Day on **Saturday, Sept. 29 from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.** at the Cheyenne County Landfill.

Materials accepted include paints, solvents, cleaners, pesticides, aerosol cans, batteries and used oil. Automobile lead acid batteries will be accepted. Please have the materials in sturdy boxes for easy and quick unloading. Have your used oil in disposable containers. Farm chemicals, appliances, tires, yard waste, explosives, school lab chemicals, medical waste, radioactive waste, ammo, compressed gas cylinders (propane), asbestos, dioxins or silvex will not be accepted. Program organizers reserve the right to reject delivery of materials.

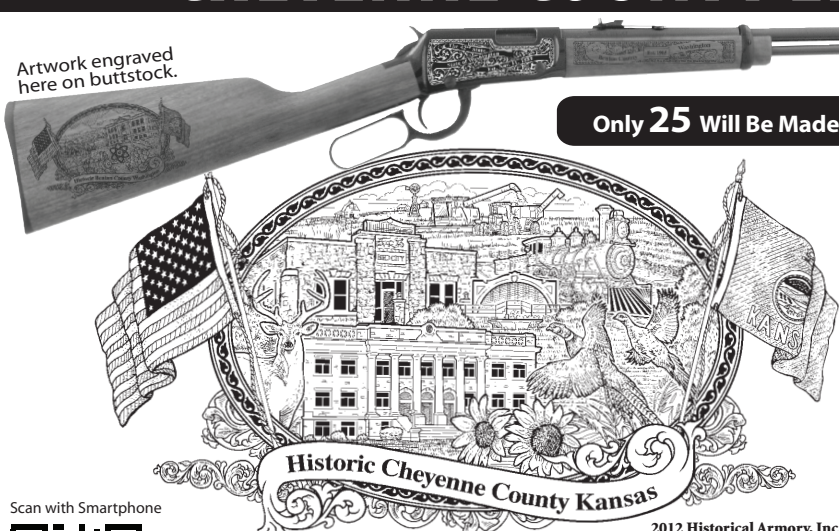
Participants are asked to leave all materials in their original containers. If the container is leaking, pack the container "as is" in another larger container and label it clearly. If another container is used, be sure it is clearly labeled. Do not mix contents of different containers. Securely package materials before transporting. Do not carry open containers of liquids with strong odors or spill potential in a closed automobile. Pack the containers so they won't tip, break or spill during travel. Waste oil should not contain gasoline, solvents, degreasers, paint or antifreeze. Keep all household hazardous waste away from children and animals.

Due to KDHE regulations these are items that can't be picked up during the City-Wide Cleanup later in the month. You do not need to call prior to bringing items to the Landfill. If you have questions, please call the Landfill at 785-332-8842, Tuesday through Saturday.

**No Household Hazardous Waste items accepted early or after the clean up date.**

- Paints
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## Business Directory

To list your business, call 785-332-3162.

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